

THE LAY-MAN'S MAGAZINE.

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND—AND THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF."

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Martinsburgh, Aug. 22, 1816.

We learn with much satisfaction, that a meeting has been lately held in this place for the purpose of reviving the Bible Society of Berkeley County. We hope each person in the county who is able will be willing to contribute to its important objects.— We know there are many families in the county of Berkeley destitute of the word of God: we believe there are whole districts of the county very poorly supplied.

EDITOR.

JOURNAL OF ABDOL MESSEE.

Journal of a voyage up the Ganges from Calcutta to Agra, made by Abdool Messee, one of the Readers supported in India by the Church Missionary Society; written by one of the Chaplains of the Honorable East India Company

(Continued from page 318.)

March 18, 1813.—Arrived at Agra. Abdool had come on some days before, and related several conversations with persons on the way about religion. Many copies of St. Matthew given away. On one occasion the number and names of the travelers were to be reported at the police. It was late when the requisition came from the head man of the village.— Abdool was unwell, and desired the eldest Christian Boy to go along with the police officer to make the report.

On writing the names, the head-man of the village, a Hindoo, said, some of these names he had never heard before, and asked who Abdool Messee might be, and what caste the boy himself was. The boy answered, he was an Isaaee (i. e. Christian.) The man asked what religion that might be. The boy replied, that of the English: and that he had a book, by reading which, they might learn what kind of religion it was; and, if they would listen, he would read in it to them. They consented. About midnight Abdool awoke; and, on inquiring for the boy, whom he missed, was told he had come and taken his book, and was gone again. Abdool, anxious for his safety, rose and went to seek him. After going to two or three places, he found him in the midst of a large company, reading St. Matthew's Gospel.

Sunday, March 21st, 1813—About three P. M. six native Christians, beside the children, &c. attended Hindostanee Worship in the Fort, with whom Abdool read prayers, and expounded Luke vi. it being the chapter in order of reading. His talent for expounding greatly improves, and discovers more and more of the influence of Divine Grace on his mind. In the evening many hundreds of the poor assembled near the Fort, to whom Abdool read and explained briefly the Ten Commandments. Many cried out, "These are true words; and the curse of God will be upon us if we obey them not?"

April 2.—A Molawee came, he said, to dispute. Abdool told him, he would not dispute, for two reasons: 1. Because, though he understood the meaning of the Gospel in general,

yet he could not say that he was able to explain every difficulty ; and, 2. Because, should they engage in dispute, he might say something that would offend, and so be guilty of a breach of hospitality. But if the visitor would sit down in a friendly way, and read a chapter or two with him in the Bible, he would do it gladly. The Molawee expressed much surprise, saying, that some, who wished to propagate Christianity, had spoken ill of their way, and that he had expected Abdool would do the same.— He sat down, and Abdool read from several parts of the New Testament, and conversed on them with him.— The result was, the Molawee went away pleased ; and on Saturday came again, bringing his son with him to hear this New Way.

April 3.—During the last week, Abdool became desirous of fixing his abode nearer to us, because the Mahometans were becoming troublesome by their constant visits, so as to interrupt his proper studies. This evening he went to visit a very old man, accounted by the Mahometans a holy man, and much resorted to by many of them. He had been a scholar of Abdool's grandfather, and had repeatedly expressed a desire to see Abdool, who had accordingly visited him on Tuesday. The old man expressed much satisfaction at seeing him, but begged he would not speak on religion before his disciples. Abdool said, as he desired it, he would not, but should take his leave then, and come when he was alone. This evening was fixed on. This evening, however, many were collected at the old man's house. Some asked, who Abdool was. The old man told them, mentioning many circumstances respecting the respectability of his family : among others that Abdool's mother's brother is President of the Royal Mahometan College at Delhi. They then asked Abdool, whence he now came : and, on being told that he

was a certain Englishman's disciple, they inquired what he had learnt.— He replied, he had gained some valuable information in religion. One of them said, " What connection has religion with the English ? Their native country is a small island, where they can know nothing ; and, in this country, what benefit in religion can you reap from them ? " Abdool told him, that he spoke thus for want of information. The old man made sign for Abdool to desist. Abdool said, " If you are afraid I should be disgraced before this company, pray understand that I go into the Bazaar to speak on these subjects, and am not ashamed of Christianity, that should flatter or deal in ambiguous language." " Well," said the old man, " but now leave off ; and come among us from time to time ; we shall be happy to see you." The discussion was thus interrupted, and nothing satisfactory could afterward be introduced ; so Abdool rose to go.— They again invited him to frequent their society : he replied he had no time to spare for mere visiting ; but if they would allow him to read a chapter in the Gospel every time he came, he would wait on them as often as they pleased. They expressed a wish that this might be the case.— Time will prove their sincerity.

April 10.—Abdool and the children walked in the afternoon to the celebrated Tage or tomb of the famous emperor Shah Jehan and his favourite queen. He had much conversation with the Mahometan Priests, as we should call them, who have always been retained to read the Koran at the tomb. In the evening a most venerable man of their number came to Abdool's house, where they had a long conversation on the Divinity of Christ. Abdool remarked it as a hopeful sign, that many of the Musselmen of late have conversed with him coolly on this subject.

Sunday, April 11.—About nine o'

clock, while the native Christian children and servants were at worship, another venerable old man, who says he is ninety years of age, came from the Tago to Abdool's. As they were kneeling down during the Liturgy, he knelt down with them. The tears began to roll down his cheeks as they proceeded in the Service: toward the end, he repeated "Amen," heartily after each petition. When prayers were ended, he went up to Abdool, and embraced him; who said, "Do you know that I am a Christian?"—He answered, "Yes: I heard so yesterday. I have often seen the English at worship, but never understood their language; but your prayers are most excellent, and my soul has been greatly refreshed by them." In the afternoon fewer of the Native Christians came, but many Mahometans and Hindoos, to the number of fifty or sixty.

April 22, 1813.—This evening, as Abdool was riding through the city to visit some of the Native Christians at their houses, in passing the police a person came to call him. A Nabob, named Alif Khan, had lately arrived from Delhi. On Abdool's passing, some of the by standers told him who he was, which induced the Nabob to call Abdool to him. After some introduction, he told Abdool that he had been informed of his name and his change of religion; and asked him why he had changed. Abdool said, "With a view to salvation."—Nab. "What then, is there no salvation in your former religion?" and he repeated a verse in Arabic signifying, that the people would be of any religion which the king favoured.—Ab. "If it were so, you and others would embrace Christianity: as it is, I alone have become a Christian." The Nabob asked of his relations; and said, he had come to visit some of his own here.—Ab. "It is a pity you will take so much trouble about earthly things, and take none about your salvation."

Nab. "I am content with my own way, and doubt not of salvation."—

Ab. "But now pray begin to doubt. I give you warning that there is no salvation in your present way"—Nab. "How do you know?" mentioning the prophets, and saying, "You know the names of these books, but have never seen them: they are in my possession, and, if you would read them, you would no longer speak ill of this way." One of the by standers said, angrily, "What, then, were all our forefathers and learned men fools, that they should not know the right way?"—Ab. "I do not say that they were fools: but they had not opportunities of knowing the truth, and therefore were less to blame: but those who took away the means of knowledge from them were great offenders." Much other conversation ensued, which ended in the Nabob's desiring that Abdool would come again, and bring some of the translations with him.

April 27.—Abdool went into the city, with a view to visit the Nabob from Delhi; but was told he was busy and could not see company. A number of Hindoo Merchants were standing together near that place, and some of them called to Abdool by the name of "Padree." Abdool, observing they wished to speak with him, asked if they meant him, or wanted him. They said "Yes." One repeated some things, which a sturdy Faqueer had told them that Abdool had said to him, about not giving charity to people able to work. "So," said he, "we hear of your preaching to the poor: but you say formerly we were all one, but that Satan has bro't about these differences." This gave him an opportunity of stating briefly the Scripture Doctrine, during which he was often interrupted by questions. Among others, having told them that he learned a true religion from a Sahib, one said, "How can you speak thus? The Sahibs let their nails and

hair grow long, and are entirely ignorant: what holiness can you learn from them?" Another said, "Their women expose themselves, and are very loose, I have heard, and great sinners." Abdool said he had never seen any Brahmin's or Pundit's wife so modest and humble as some of the English ladies. One said, "But are not our books true, and do not our Pundits tell us the truth?" Abdool said, "If I were to speak my real sentiments on that head, you might perhaps be offended." They all said, "Oh! no." He then told them the vanity of trusting in the works of their own hands, &c. The Faqueer he had refused to give money to now joined them, and was very angry, and said he would send Collee (the Goddess of Destruction) in the night to destroy him.—Abdool: "If you mean any servant or disciple of your own by that name, the Chokedars (Watchmen) will take care that he shall not get at me to kill me; but as to that black figure which you call Collee, I have no fear that it will rise out of its place to injure me; and to morrow I will shew myself to you, if it please God, in spite of Collee." The Hindoos laughed at the Faqueer, and begged Abdool would often come.

April 29.—The old man from the Tage, referred to on the 11th inst. has continued to come, and to shew great love for the Word of God. He has spoken of Abdool in the city, to many, with much respect. In consequence a wealthy Mahometan sent to invite Abdool yesterday to visit him. On entering the house he found great preparations for a feast, and many assembled. All the party shewed him great respect; the master of the house, a man advanced in years, in particular. After some time Abdool said, he understood he had sent for him to converse on religion; but he perceived that they were met for other purposes. The master of the house said there was no harm in such entertain-

ments; and, if he did not entertain his guests, they would not come again; and asked if he never went to Nautches (dances). Abdool said, not since he had been to Calcutta; and that from the society of such women no good could arise, but much evil.—The young men seemed amused, and the old man too laughed. Abdool said, he no doubt was at ease with respect to the pardon of his sins, since now in his old age he seemed so unconcerned. "Ah," said he, "your conversation is much more becoming;" but then, &c.—excusing himself as vain people do. Abdool soon rose to depart. The Mahometan gentleman asked leave to send a portion home with him; which is a usual custom among them. Abdool begged he would not, as he had enough to supply his necessities; and, especially, would not be a partaker in such vain entertainments. The young man, son of the host, thinking the proposal arose from considerations of expense, said in a haughty way, that he allowed his Kitmudgar (servant) one hundred rupees per month. "Very likely," said Abdool; but, for a Faqueer, a blanket and stuff are sufficient." Then wishing them all good evening, he begged them to observe, that he came among them a Christian, and left them a Christian. He was attended to the door, and entreated to come again: he said, if they would send for him to read the Gospel to them, he would come with pleasure, but not otherwise.

In going to the above house, he called at the Hindoo Merchant's where he found also the Faqueer. They smiled on his approach; and one said, on his reminding the Faqueer that Collee had not come the preceeding night. "True; you who do not believe in these things, they have no power over"—Abdool: "But should they not rather injure those who do not obey them, than you who worship them?"—"True said one; and

the fact is that they are all nonsense; but our wives and the old women would plague us to death, if we did not obey the idols."—"Then," said Abdool, "do you yourselves confess your idols to be folly?"—"We do indeed," said they all.—This gave Abdool an opportunity of speaking on the subject, and they begged him often to come among them.

To be continued.

Bible Societies, a preventative of Poverty.

On this subject many excellent remarks will be found in "The Influence of Bible Societies on the temporal necessities of the Poor," a pamphlet by the Rev. Dr. Chalmers of Glasgow. From that valuable and interesting work we extract a few passages.

"After all, what is the best method of providing for the secular necessities of the poor? Is it by laboring to meet the necessity after it has occurred, or by laboring to establish a principle and a habit which would go far to prevent its existence? If you wish to get rid of a noxious stream, you may first try to intercept it, by throwing across a barrier; but in this way you only spread the pestilential water over a greater extent of ground, and when the basin is filled, a stream as copious as before is formed out of its overflow. The most effectual method, were it possible to carry it into accomplishment, would be to dry up the source. The parallel in a great measure holds. If you wish to extinguish poverty, combat with it in its first elements. If you confine your beneficence to the relief of actual poverty, you do nothing—Dry up, if possible, the spring of poverty; for every attempt to intercept the running stream has totally failed. The education and the religious principles of Scotland have not

annihilated pauperism, but they have restrained it to a degree that is almost incredible to our neighbors of the south; they keep down the mischief in its principle, they impart a sobriety and a right sentiment of independence to the character of our peasantry, they operate as a check upon prodigality and idleness. The maintenance of parish schools is a burden upon the landed property of Scotland, but it is a cheap defence against the poor rates, a burden far heavier, and which is aggravating perpetually. The writer of this paper knows of a parish in Fife, the average maintenance of whose poor is defrayed by twenty-four pounds sterling a year, and of a parish of the same population in Somersetshire where the annual assessments come to thirteen hundred pounds sterling. The preventive regimen of the one country does more than the positive applications of the other. In England they have suffered poverty to rise to all the virulence of a formed and obstinate disease. But they may as well think of arresting the destructive progress of a torrent by throwing across an embankment, as think that mere positive administration of relief will put a stop to the accumulating mischiefs of poverty."

"It will be seen then, that the Bible Society is not barely defensible, but may be plead for upon that very ground on which its enemies have raised their opposition to it. Its immediate object is neither to feed the hungry nor to clothe the naked; but in every country under the benefit of its exertions, there will be less hunger to feed, and less nakedness to clothe. It does not cure actual poverty, but anticipates eventual poverty. It aims its decisive thrust at the heart and principle of the mischief; and instead of suffering it to form into the obstinacy of an inextirpable disease, it smothers and destroys it in the infancy of its first elements."

"This assimilation of our plan to a tax, may give rise to a world of impetuous declamation; but let it ever be remembered, that the institution of a Bible Society gives you the whole benefit of such a tax, without its odiousness. It brings up their economy to a higher pitch, but it does so, not in the way which they resist, but in the way which they choose. The single circumstance of its being a *voluntary* act, forms the defence and the answer to all the clamors of an affected sympathy. You take from the poor. No! they give. You take beyond their ability. Of this they are the best judges. You abridge their comforts. No! There is a comfort in the exercise of charity; there is a comfort in the act of lending a hand to a noble enterprize; there is a comfort in the contemplation of its progress; there is a comfort in rendering a service to a friend; and when that friend is the Saviour, and that service the circulation of the message he left behind him, it is a comfort which many of the poor are ambitious to share in. Leave them to judge of their comfort; and if in point of fact they do give their penny a week to a Bible Society, it just speaks them to have more comfort in this way of spending it, than in any other which occurs to them."

SABBATH DAY.

From the N. Y. Spectator.

MR. EDITOR—I, like many others in this city, am more governed by my desires than my judgment; and as it is fashionable for young men to take a ride on the Sabbath day, I have been one of that number; and, as usual, my friend and myself took a ride last Sabbath on Long Island. After dashing about at New-Utrecht, Bath, &c. we fetched up at Flatbush. While at the public house, (which was somewhat crowded with singular company) I observed a number of peo-

ple of color in Mr. Riley's printing-house; and from the landlord, I learned that a "number of young Ladies and Gentlemen walked every Sunday from New York to try to teach the *Negroes* to read!" As I have always been a great friend to schools, I, with my friend, visited it, and to my great surprise, found about 200 of all ages and sexes. We were seated with the teachers and other visitors; when one of the teachers arose, and observed, this was the day appointed to redeem the tickets which had been given to the scholars for *good behaviour, industrious application, &c.* To shew to the visitors, as well as to encourage the scholars a class was requested to read; and to my great surprise, their performance was that which would have done credit to any school; some of them, we were informed, could not, when they commenced, (this was the 15th day,) spell words of three letters; one of them, a girl about nine years of age, we were informed, did not know her letters when she entered, but now read with ease. The tickets were redeemed by giving books, &c. Six or eight copies of the Bible were given to those whose conduct had been such as to induce a belief it would not be abused. The school was dismissed in an orderly manner, after having read to them the 4th chapter of Ephesians and 4th of Proverbs.

The scene was a novel one; and I could not refrain from contrasting the manner I was spending the day, with those whose company I was then in. I here beheld the offering of a few, to this poor and despised race of the human family; in them I could see the tear of gratitude trickle down the cheek of the man of 70—and the smiles of satisfaction in the child of 4 years. The impression made on my mind at the time was such as to set judgment at work, which has brought me to this conclusion, never to grati-

by my desires in riding as a matter of pleasure on the Sabbath-day. C. I.

HORRID PAGAN CUSTOMS.

Forty-seven Women burned with the Body of the Prince of Marva. In a letter from Father Martin, a Jesuit Missionary in Madura.

The Prince of Marva dying in 1770, his wives to the number of 47, were burned with his corpse in the following manner:—They digged a deep ditch without the town, and in it erected a pile of wood, on the top of which the deceased was laid, richly clothed and adorned. When they had set this on fire, with a world of ceremonies performed by the Brahmans, that company of unfortunate women appeared, covered with jewels, and adorned with flowers, like so many victims designed for the sacrifice. They walked several times about the pile, the heat of which was perceived at a great distance. The chief of them, having addressed the successor of the late prince, resigned the dagger of the deceased into his hands; who took it without showing the least sign of grief or compassion. 'Alas!' said she, 'what further comes of all human happiness! I am sensible I am throwing myself headlong into hell!'—These words struck all the spectators with horror. She had a Christian woman in her service, who frequently discoursed with her concerning the truths of revealed religion, in order to persuade her to embrace Christianity, but without success. She having thus spoken, boldly turned her face to the pile, and, calling upon her gods, flung herself into the midst of the flames. The second of these women was the sister of Raya, a prince of the blood, who assisted at that detestable ceremony.—When he received the jewels from his sister with which she was adorned, he broke out into tears, embracing

her most tenderly: she seemed unmoved at it, and with a resolute countenance, looking sometimes at the pile, and sometimes at the assistants, cried with a loud voice, Sheeva, Sheeva! which is the name of one of her idols, and threw herself into the flames, as the first had done. The other women followed her soon after; some of them appeared composed, and others were cast down and bewildered. One of them, frightened above the rest, ran to a Christian soldier who was present, and begged of him to save her. But he, stunned with surprise, pushed the unfortunate creature from him into the glowing pit, and retired immediately; but so terrified, that he soon fell ill of a fever and frenzy, of which he died the night following. Whatever intrepidity some of those women discovered at first, yet, as soon as they felt the flames, they roared in a most dreadful manner; and tumbling over each other, strove to gain the brim of the pit—but in vain; for the assistants prevented it, by throwing upon them large pieces of wood. The next day the Brahmans gathered their bones, which they threw into the sea. The pit was levelled, a temple built on the spot, and the deceased prince and his wives reckoned among the deities.

GOOD EFFECTS OF PRAYER.

From a Foreign Clergyman.

About forty years ago, there lived in the suburbs of Basle a man and his wife, with four young children in extreme poverty. They were indebted to a certain person in a small sum (about half-a-crown) of which payment was insisted by the following Monday. The wife had been obliged to promise it; which she did in confidence that God would enable her to perform. It was her custom, in cases of great distress, to offer up fervent

prayer to God, upon her knees, together with her children; which she did also upon this occasion. Sunday evening, however, came, without any apparent prospect of relief, although every thing had been tried. Nevertheless, the woman declared that as God had so often heard her prayers, she would not yet despair. About eight o'clock, a pious Christian, who had but once or twice before visited these people, entered their apartment. In the course of his conversation with them, not a word had passed respecting their present embarrassment. At parting, however, he took a box, with which one of the children was playing, and filled it hastily with money, without counting it, to the exact amount, as they afterwards found, of the sum which they were engaged to pay on the following day.

BIBLE ANECDOTE.

At the Leeds Bible Society,
The Rev. Mr. Ramflier, of Fulneck, mentioned the case of a *Hottentot*, who had been a despiser of every thing good, and from his vicious habits and gross conduct, a terror to all decent persons. One day returning home intoxicated, he had to swim across a deep river, but being disabled by the liquor, he laid himself down and slept off its effects. When he awoke, he was impressed with a sense of his awful state; for he had often been warned. Under these convictions, he was much distressed to know how to pray. He went to his master, a Dutchman, to consult with him, but his master gave him no encouragement. A sense of his wickedness increased, and he had no one near him to direct him. Occasionally, however, he was admitted with the family at the time of prayer. The portion of Scripture which was one day read by the master, was the parable of the Pharisee and Publican.—While the prayer of the Pharisee was

read, the poor *Hottentot* thought within himself, this is a good man, here is nothing for me; but when his master came to the prayer of the Publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner';—this suits me, he cried, now I know how to pray! With this prayer he immediately retired, and prayed night and day for two days, and then found peace. Full of joy and gratitude, he went into the fields, and as he had no one to whom he could speak, he exclaimed, 'Ye hills, ye rocks, ye trees, ye rivers, hear what God has done for my soul—he has been merciful to me a sinner!'

Anecdote of Dr. Johnson.

A young gentleman, a godson of Dr. Johnson, called to see him a very short time before his death. In the course of conversation, the Doctor asked him what books he read. The young man replied,—The books Sir, which you have given me.—Doctor Johnson summoning up all his strength and with a piercing eye fixed upon the youth, exclaimed, with his utmost energy,—*Sam, Sam, read the Bible; all the books that are worth reading have their foundation and their merits there.*

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